DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 316 958 EA 021 795

TITLE	Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring. A Joint Study.
INSTITUTION	Appalachia Educational Lab., Charleston, W. Va.; Virginia Education Association, Richmond.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Mar 90
CONTRACT	400-86-0001
NOTE	51p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325 ($4.50).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Development; Institutional Mission; Instructional Program Divisions; Junior High Schools; *Middle Schools; *Preadolescents; *School Organization; Student Development
IDENTIFIERS	*Virginia

ABSTRACT

Educators and policymakers are beginning to realize that students aged 10 through 14 are not well served by the "miniature high school" atmosphere of the typical junior high school, where the primary emphasis is placed on academic achievement in departmentalized course offerings. A program that is student-centered and that better responds to the unique social and learning needs of preadolescents is more appropriate. In response to a recommendation from the Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education, the Virginia Department of Education developed a 4-year (1988-92) plan that permitted individual schools to determine, within guidelines, the most effective organizational plan and instructional methods for their students. Chronicled within this document are the experiences of chosen core committees from Monelison Junior High School in Amherst County and Prince Edward Middle School in Prince Edward County as they worked with their faculties and administrators to redesign their schools' organization and programs and begin the transition to true middle schools. Additionally, the responses to 15 open-ended questions of the committee members regarding their experiences during the first year of restructuring are included. The Virginia Department of Education goals for middle school program design and the 15-item project description form are appended. (105 references) (KM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED316958

Middle Schools in the Making:
A Lesson in Restructuring

A Joint Study by the

Virginia Education Association
116 S. Third Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

and

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P. O. Box 1348
Charleston, West Virginia 25325

March 1990

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Slacks

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Middle Schools in the Making:
A Lesson in Restructuring

A Joint Study by

VEA

Virginia Education Association

and

AEL

Appalachia Educational Laboratory

March 1990

Funded by the

OERI

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U. S. Department of Education
Washington, D. C.

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), Inc., works with educators in ongoing R & D-based efforts to improve education and educational opportunity. AEL serves as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. It also operates the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. AEL works to improve:

- professional quality,
- curriculum and instruction,
- community support, and
- opportunity for access to quality education by all children.

Information about AEL projects, programs, and services is available by writing or calling AEL, Post Office Box 1348, Charleston, West Virginia 25325; 800/624-9120 (outside WV), 800/344-6646 (in WV), and 347-0400 (local); 304/347-0487 (FAX number).

This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education, under contract number 400-86-0001. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department, or any other agency of the U. S. Government.

These materials are issued in draft form for developmental purposes.

AEL is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Virginia Education Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory thank the following study group members—teachers and administrators from two middle schools—who struggled with the opportunities and frustrations of a bottom-up approach to restructuring schools to create better learning places for children. Deciding where to go, agreeing on how to get there, and convincing everyone to not just come along for the ride but to help pull the load have not been easy. The journey is not over. However, their stories of the first year of restructuring middle schools should contribute to the success of other faculties making the "same trip." Their time and efforts in school change, the study group meetings to discuss the process, and their records of progress are much appreciated.

Monelison Junior High School, Amherst County Schools, Virginia

Paige DeCarlo, teacher
Beverly Jones, teacher
Ken Payne, teacher
Ron Rasnake, teacher
Horace Rice, principal
Pam Rosenberger, teacher
Eleanor Ross, instructional supervisor
Cheryl Sprouce, assistant principal

Prince Edward Middle School, Prince Edward County Schools, Virginia

Mary Baylis, teacher
Angeles Christian, teacher
Becky Gulliford, teacher
Ann Gussett, teacher
Barbara Toney, teacher
Raye Tupper, assistant principal

Other helpful participants in training sessions and in study group meetings were Virginia Education Association staff:

Jim Caruth, Director
EduServ
Prince George, VA

JoAnn Karsh, Director
Chesapeake Bay Education Associations
Chesapeake, VA

Betty Moser, Director
CenVaServ
Lynchburg, VA

Helen Rolfe, Director
Instructional and Professional Development
Virginia Education Association
Richmond, VA

Meeting facilitation, study group communications, melding the writing of several authors, editing, typesetting, graphic design, and layout were all important contributions from the following AEL staff members:

Kim Audia
Becky Burns
Pat Cahape
Peggy Dent
Jane Hange
Donna Kirk
Carolyn Luzader
Carla McClure

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The middle school movement is one of the largest, most comprehensive efforts in the school restructuring process. One key reason, experts believe, is that educators and policymakers are beginning to realize that students aged 10-14 are not well served by programs best characterized as "miniature high schools." In the typical junior high school serving grades seven through nine, primary emphasis is placed on academic achievement in departmentalized course offerings. However, students in the middle grades (5-8 or 6-8) are undergoing rapid physical changes, are experiencing problems of parental and peer relationships, and are often unable to sense the importance of schoolwork itself. Therefore, a program that is student-centered and better responds to the unique social and learning needs of preadolescents is more appropriate. Epstein summarized the goals of such a program in 1987: "Effective education in the middle learning years aims to increase all students' intellectual, social, and emotional skills to build new knowledge, talents, positive attitudes toward learning, social competencies, and coping skills" (p. 9).

Recognizing the need to change the structure and programs of schools that serve early adolescents, the Virginia "Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education" recommended in 1988 "that steps be taken immediately to restructure education in the middle school grades (6-8)" (Virginia Department of Education, 1988). In response to this recommendation, the Virginia Department of Education developed a four-year (1988-1992) plan that would permit individual schools to determine the most effective organizational plan and instructional methods for their students within guidelines. These guidelines address the comprehensive developmental characteristics and needs of early adolescents, such as:

- positive school climate;
- high expectations for all students to achieve;
- the need for every student to be known and advised regularly by an adult in the school;
- emphasis on students' doing rather than saying;
- emphasis on cooperative and concrete learning;
- emphasis on higher order thinking skills;
- emphasis on the interdisciplinary nature of skills and knowledge; and
- flexibility in scheduling and organizational structure.

Since teachers work most closely with students and are largely responsible for implementing restructuring goals, they were encouraged and expected to participate in the educational decisions made in their schools (Virginia Department of Education, 1988).

To assist teachers in their role of participatory decisionmakers in the restructuring process, the Virginia Education Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory formed a study group of middle school educators from two schools. Study group members reviewed literature on middle schools and restructuring, began the restructuring process in their schools—discussing decisions made and problems confronted—and recorded the organizational and personal grief and gains experienced during the 1988-1989 school year, the inital year of restructuring in both schools. The final product of the study group, *Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring*, is designed to assist other school faculties involved in restructuring middle schools.

Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring chronicles the experiences of the

core committees of Monelison Junior High School and Prince Edward Middle School as they worked with their faculties and administrators to redesign their school organizations and programs and begin the transition to true middle schools. Realizing that each school's experience would be different, the study group members from Monelison and Prince Edward decided to develop separate school chronologies that record their school's progress. To enrich the data gathered from school chronologies, individual study group members were asked to complete a survey designed to elicit reflections on their experience during the first year of restructuring. These progress reflections include examples of decisions and actions made by both schools' core committee and faculty, as well as individual and school perceptions of the restructuring process.

Although commonalities are evident in the progress and perceptions of both schools and individuals, differences are also noticeable. For example, educators from both schools agreed that developing a mission statement and changing scheduling or class size were the year's most important and most controversial actions. On the other hand, responses from individual study group members indicate differences between schools in perceptions of the biggest obstacles to the restructuring process. Overall, study group participants were in agreement that the process had been difficult, but rewarding. Most comments made by individuals as they reflected on their progress during the first year of restructuring illustrate feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring is not a step-by-step guide to restructuring middle schools; rather, it is a report of the day-to-day experiences, frustrations, and accomplishments of educators actively involved in the restructuring process. Their stories, concerns, reflections, and recommendations can inform other school faculties as they begin restructuring to middle schools.

Epstein, J. (1987). *Education of early adolescents.* Paper submitted to the State Task Force on Middle Learning Years. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University.

Virginia Department of Education. (1988). *Restructuring education in the middle school grades.* Richmond, VA: Author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
Acknowledgements	iii
Executive Summary	v
Introduction	1
Planning the Study	1
Conducting the Study	2
Purpose	2
Help Us Make This Publication Better	2
Rationale	3
The Monelison Story—The First Year	7
Helpful Hints	13
Success Highlights	14
Mission Setting Meeting Agenda	14
Prince Edward Middle School Chronology	15
Progress Reflections Analysis	19
References: Middle Schools	27
References: School-Based Decisionmaking	29
Appendices	
A: Virginia Department of Education Goals for Middle School Program Design	
B: VEA-AEL Middle School Study Group Progress Reflections Form	

INTRODUCTION

AEL seeks to provide professional development opportunities to educators by working with and through their associations. Since 1985, one way that the Classroom Instruction (CI) program has assisted associations is through the creation of study groups. AEL's purpose for a study group is to assist educators in conducting and using research.

A study group is composed of educators who are organized to conduct a study on an educational issue and who produce a product that is useful to their colleagues. Associations and AEL jointly select topics for study groups, although member selection is completed by associations. AEL staff participate in meetings as members of the study group and usually take a facilitative role. AEL provides a small grant to the association to assist with the study group, but the in-kind contributions that association or individual members often make far exceed AEL's grant.

The responsibility for dissemination lies with both AEL and the association. Usually AEL provides dissemination to the other three states in its Region, while the association handles the announcement and dissemination of the product in its own state. AEL often provides a small grant to assist with the dissemination of the product or to sponsor opportunities for study group members to share the findings of their study at state or regional conferences.

Planning the Study

"The Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education recommended that steps be taken immediately to restructure education in the middle schools grades," begins the guidelines on reorganization of Virginia schooling in grades 6-8 (Virginia Department of Education, p. 1). *Restructuring Education in the Middle School Grades* was designed as an overview of how the restructuring, required of all divisions by the 1992-93 school year, will work. This report describes two phases of the restructuring: (1) identification of Vanguard Schools (schools believed by local administrators to be exceptionally successful in meeting the needs of their students and substantially achieving the goals of good middle schools), and (2) development and implementation of a restructuring process in all other schools which have grades 6, 7, or 8 (p. 2). The Department of Education in *Restructuring Education in the Middle School Grades* outlined few mandated procedures to reach the middle grades concept in each school. However, goals for the basis of total program design addressing the comprehensive developmental characteristics and needs of early adolescents were identified. The 17 goals are included as Appendix A.

Shortly before the release of the Department's report, staff and leaders of the Virginia Education Association identified the restructuring of the middle school as the most significant topic for investigation by a VEA-AEL study group. Helen Rolfe, Instruction and Professional Development director, and Jane Hange, director of AEL's Classroom Instruction program, discussed during October 1988 the formation of a study group of members, all middle school/junior high educators actively involved in examining present practices and future directions for their schools. JoAnn Karsh and Betty Moser, UniServ directors for divisions in which restructuring projects had begun, nominated groups of teachers and administrators from Prince Edward Middle School in Farmville, VA, and Monelison Junior High School in Madison Heights, VA, as study group members. These educators, it was planned, would convene to discuss the restructuring progress of each faculty, the nature of decisions or problems confronted, and the organizational and personal grief and gains experienced in a largely bottom-up reorganization. The product tentatively was identified as a publication for other middle school faculties involved in restructuring during 1989-92.

Conducting the Study

Recognizing that their school organizations and the specific issues they would confront would differ from each other and from those of the readers, study group members chose to emphasize the processes they used. Rather than creating a step-by-step guide to restructuring a middle school, the group of 9 teachers, 2 school administrators, 1 division administrator, and 3 VEA UniServ directors began documenting the meetings of key teacher-led groups which set restructuring into motion in each school. As study group members received training in group processes and the importance of documentation and met to share their stories and concerns, they realized that capturing the frustrations and accomplishments would be as useful to readers as the record of events of their first year of restructuring. Group members decided to develop chronologies of the practical (history of the formation of the Core Committees, actions of key meetings, etc.) as well as the personal (emerging leadership qualities, division versus compromise, getting commitment, etc.) milestones of reorganizing better schools for young adolescents.

Teacher study group members from Monelison Junior High and Prince Edward Middle School maintained records of events and logs of personal reflections on changes occurring during the 1988-89 school year, the initial year of restructuring at both schools. They became the reporters of restructuring middle schools as they were asked to share their stories with local newspapers, faculties from other schools, and with participants in a VEA conference on collaboration. Members from both schools realized through study group meetings that their stories would differ and determined that this publication should include chronologies developed separately. All study group members agreed that there was no correct path to restructuring and that their chronologies would illustrate schools in the making rather than final products. Through discussions and draft reviews, the chronologies which follow were drafted and revised by teachers and administrators at each school.

AEL staff developed the introduction, rationale, and reference sections of *Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring*. Study group members edited all sections which were then melded by AEL staff to form a final draft. This draft was reviewed by study group members and the VEA president and IPD director, final changes were incorporated, and the publication was typeset and laid out by AEL staff. Camera-ready masters were provided to VEA staff who disseminate the study group product in Virginia. AEL publicizes *Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring* in its Region and provides copies at cost through the Resource Center.

Purpose

Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring records the progress of the first year of restructuring toward middle schools focused on student outcomes that was accomplished by two Virginia faculties. Their stories reflect the teacher-led process which will continue to shape these schools as the second and third years of the restructuring proceed. The authors intend that the chronologies should not serve as maps but rather as compasses with arrows pointing toward paths to solving the communication and responsibility issues inherent in bottom-up change. Study group members invite you to walk through their schools as they continue to become middle schools focused on developing "positive student self-esteem, meaningful learning and achievement, and successful transition to further education and productive adulthood" (Virginia Department of Education, p. 1).

Help Us Make This Publication Better

Readers are requested to complete the product evaluation form included within and to fold, staple, and return it to AEL. Suggestions for revisions to the document and/or similar publications are welcomed.

RATIONALE

As information has emerged from research on school effectiveness, educators have become convinced of the necessity of developmentally appropriate curricula and teaching practices. The difficulty of accommodating the special needs of early adolescent students has become a particular concern among educators. This concern is not new.

In the 1920s, a similar societal concern arose in response to the decreasing number of students who failed to graduate from high school. As a result, junior high schools were established, featuring vocational training and work-study programs to increase motivation of adolescents to continue their schooling. As the name implies, junior high schools were modeled after high schools. A visitor to a junior high school usually will see activities and routines similar to those in high school. For instance, students move to different classrooms for each scheduled subject area throughout the day and receive instruction from a different teacher each period. Often students are tracked or grouped into classes according to ability.

The use of departmentalized instruction has certain advantages to teachers and students alike. Teachers are better able to develop expert knowledge in their subject areas when they spend more time preparing for fewer subjects. Indeed, students benefit from concentrated expert knowledge and achieve more in departmentalized instruction of math and science (McPartland & Wu, 1988). Research has also shown that tracking is significantly beneficial to math achievement in high achieving students (Becker, 1987).

Once again declines in academic motivation of early adolescents have drawn attention to school practices in the middle grades, and junior high schools have been criticized for being "little high schools" that ignore the developmental needs of students. Current studies have in fact suggested that the decline in achievement among adolescents may be due to a mismatch between the developmental needs of middle school students and the educational environment they experience (Mac Iver, 1989). This is especially true for disadvantaged students at risk of failure and dropping out of school. In response to these criticisms and the additional momentum offered by a strong national concern for at-risk students, educators have turned their attention to restructuring middle school education in a manner that maintains the benefits of content specialization and accommodates the developmental needs of early adolescents.

Although middle schools have existed in various forms since the 1950s, attention to the education of early adolescents appears to have been overshadowed by concerns for elementary and high school education. This dilemma is described in a report published by the Center for Early Adolescence (Wheelock & Dorman, 1988).

> In much of the general literature in education, the unique purpose and mission of schooling for young adolescents is as ill-defined as its structure. For example, the lack of agreement on preferred organization of middle grades is reflected in the fact that nationwide education for young adolescents takes the form of 36 different grade configurations which include grades 6 through 8 (Lipsitz, 1984). Such a hodgepodge of grade configurations is symptomatic of an uncertainty about where these grades—and by implication the children in them—really do belong. (p. 18)

The Center for Research on Elementary and

Middle Schools (CREMS) of The Johns Hopkins University has conducted extensive research on the effects of middle school practices on adolescent student achievement (CREMS, 1987). The data collected from these studies have helped to clarify the confusion surrounding middle schools and have provided possible blueprints for restructuring middle schools.

McPartland and Wu (1988), for example, differentiated school practices among elementary, middle, and high schools with reference to staffing, grouping, and scheduling. School practices of the different levels were distinguished according to the emphasis on curricular requirements and students' developmental needs. Elementary schools place strong value on student needs as reflected in self-contained classrooms where the same teacher teaches all subject areas to the same group of students and seeks to understand and appreciate students as individuals.

High schools are organized primarily around departmentalized instruction so that each teacher is a subject-matter specialist, serves a greater number of students, and emphasizes curricular requirements.

Middle schools vary on a continuum from student-centered to subject-centered orientations. McPartland, Coldiron, and Braddock (1987) noted that many middle schools are experiencing a press to model their schools toward the subject-centered approach. Current studies suggest that adoption of this approach occurs at the expense of teacher-student relationships.

For example, McPartland and Wu (1988) demonstrated that although content specialization tended to have a positive effect on science and social studies achievement, self-contained classrooms produced more positive student-teacher relationships. Also, a study by Becker (1987) concluded that in middle schools, students of low and low-middle socioeconomic backgrounds achieved more in English, reading, science, and social studies when they interacted with fewer teachers.

These findings and others related to homogenous ability grouping indicate that there is a trade-off in achievement between subject-centered and student-centered school practices. Further, the effects of each structure vary according to student socioeconomic status, grade level, and subject matter. The implications of these findings suggest that to affect more positive teacher-student relationships, as well as higher student achievement, the structure of middle schools should be flexible enough to meet the unique needs of the student population in each school and community. For this reason, many educators believe that efforts toward middle school effectiveness must move beyond improvement to actual restructuring.

Recognizing the potential for resistance and disruption associated with basic changes in school structure, recommendations have been made to ease the transition and enhance the chances of success in restructuring efforts. McCune (1987) suggests that any restructuring efforts must begin with and be guided by strategic planning processes similar to those used by leading corporations in effecting organizational change. After the initial gathering of a database of needs within the school and community and the developing of mission and goal statements, the delicate task of encouraging participants to buy into the work and the pain of change begins. This phase is often frustrating and time consuming, but essential to real change.

Once participants are committed to the need for change, the development of specific plans takes place. Here again, conflicts can be expected as staff members give up familiar notions and practices as they negotiate new policies and practices within a new structural framework. The entire process of strategic planning requires strong resources of support and encouragement:

> We know from experience, however, that getting people to think creatively about improvement or restructuring requires giving them permission to think creatively, providing them with data and information about changes in our current and future society, and providing examples, models

and demonstrations of what might be (McCune, 1987, p. 2).

"What might be" may include teams of teachers planning interdisciplinary units, team teaching, advising students, and reviewing school policies and practices to enhance learning and the physical and social development of early adolescents.

Virginia school divisions, in response to guidelines from the Virginia Department of Education and recommendations of the Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education, are strategically planning for the restructuring of middle schools. The Department's plan, entitled "Restructuring Education in the Middle School Grades," is based on three assumptions. First, it is believed that interventions for at-risk students must be success oriented and begin early. Second, it is believed that for students to feel successful in school, they must have a developmentally appropriate learning environment. Third, it is believed assistance should be provided to help teachers and administrators enhance skills and capabilities in providing a success oriented, developmentally appropriate learning environment for early adolescents.

As discussed in the "Planning the Study" section of this document, a five-year plan utilizing Vanguard Schools, middle schools identified as exemplars in several variables important to meeting the needs of early adolescents, has been adopted to bring about this restructuring in a way that allows for the necessary trial and error associated with charting new territory. It is the intention of the Virginia Department of Education that:

> Restructuring the middle school grades should produce schools in which the professional staff clearly understands the developmental characteristics of the students, and uses that knowledge in curriculum design, in instruction, and in planning all of the school's activities. The leadership for restructuring education in the middle school grades should come from effective principals and from the participation of teachers in the important educational decisions which they will have to carry out. The expectation for students should be that all will learn effectively, will make gains in academic achievement, and will be helped by the school in their physical, social, and emotional development (Virginia Department of Education, 1988, p. 1).

An integral part of the Virginia plan is the use of participatory decisionmaking as the vehicle for restructuring middle schools. The first phase of planning for each school is a careful study and review by faculty and others. The studies are designed to help staff members acquire a background of knowledge about developmental characteristics of adolescents, current research on effective teaching and grouping practices, and technology as an instructional and motivational tool. Based on this body of knowledge, staff members then review faculty strengths and weaknesses and current school practices to determine the degree to which student needs are being met.

Emerging from the staff review, goals will be adopted for each school which are based upon the Virginia Department of Education Goals for Middle School Program Design (see Appendix A), and which address identified school needs in specific terms. Implementation of goals will be carried out through collaborative arrangements for staff involvement in decisionmaking and problem-solving, with staff development activities provided according to demonstrated need.

Realizing the potential for substantive reform in middle schools and for the conflict and misunderstanding associated with fundamental change, the Virginia Education Association developed a plan of assistance for teachers involved in restructuring efforts (Rolfe, 1989). The plan is based on five assumptions. First, VEA intends to play a proactive role of assisting, facilitating, supporting, informing, and training. Second, the association will assist in trust building among participants in the face of the confusion and conflict often present with change. Third, VEA will seek to build a network of collaboration among various educational groups.

Fourth, the association will help maintain the focus of restructuring efforts upon sound educational decisions about students and learning.

> Last, we know that the restructuring of schools has the potential to be a powerful professional renewal tool for practitioners. Schools will be the centers where professionals learn new approaches, take risks, tolerate failure, share new knowledge, model desired behaviors, and tap information resources for research-based decisions. As an organization we want to be a positive force in this renewal process (Rolfe, 1989, p. 9).

Virginia teachers who are or will be involved in restructuring efforts are hearing messages of support from many sources. The Virginia Department of Education's plan for restructuring includes no directives or mandates; instead, the plan offers resources as each middle school faculty develops a structure of policy and practice suited to the needs of its students. This support is offered in a time frame that allows for planning and thoughtful reflection.

Training will be available to staff members at each restructuring phase. Staff members of Vanguard Schools will be utilized in training for those schools who begin restructuring efforts in later phases. Additional support will be offered through tapes, videos, and a professional library. In addition, the Virginia Department of Education will sponsor a computer network of middle schools as a subsidiary to Virginia NET, drawing on existing resources of Special NET. Through Virginia NET, educators in schools throughout the state can send electronic mail, link into one- and two-way bulletin boards for each division or subject area of the Virginia Department, and access the communications and general and special education content available through Special NET, a national network available from GTE Educational Services.

The support of the Virginia Education Association will be in the formation of a network of middle school teachers, the monitoring of state legislation, the provision of assistance to individual schools, and the development of a clearinghouse of information related to restructuring middle schools.

By supporting the VEA/AEL study group in documenting the first efforts toward restructuring of Monelison Junior High and Prince Edward Middle School staff members, VEA is offering a very concrete message which acknowledges the often tedious, painful, exhilarating, and empowering experience of invention. Additional benefits provided by VEA include a minigrant of $1000 to the restructuring project of Monelison Junior High to aid released time for meetings, school visitations, and training. Also, the time and talents of two VEA UniServ directors have aided study group meetings and trainings. VEA plans to disseminate the publication as part of the association's assistance to schools involved in restructuring.

The message from both the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Education Association for teachers involved in restructuring efforts is clear. Changing the basic structure of middle schools takes time, is personally and professionally risky, requires work, but above all is necessary to the common goal—providing a learning environment in which early adolescents can succeed. In recognition of this fact, a safety net of support will be offered to those who invest the time, risk, and work of restructuring to ensure the success of their efforts.

The Monelison Story—The First Year

by Paige DeCarlo, Beverly Jones, Ken Payne,
Ron Rasnake, Horace Rice, Pam Rosenberger,
Eleanor Ross, and Cheryl Sprouce

Monelison Junior High School is located in Amherst County, VA (65 teachers and 835 students). We currently house grades six through nine. With the restructuring proposal, ninth grade will become part of the county high school in 1990-91.

In September 1988, we were informed that all junior high schools in the state of Virginia would change to middle schools within five years. Betty Moser, UniServ director for Central Virginia, knew of our unique position as a junior high with sixth through ninth grades and felt that Monelison should be one of the forerunners in the state's middle school movement.

Our narrative is a realistic account of what happened to us in the midst of our transition. It reflects our accomplishments, failures, confusion, and feelings. Though we tried to keep our sense of humor throughout the entire process, there were times when laughter escaped us. However, time has given us a different perspective on some of the things we did and enabled us to laugh about them now. We've tried to inject some of that lightheartedness into this report to make it more enjoyable for us to write and more entertaining for you to read. However, we caution you not to let the occasional "off-the-wall" comment mask the difficult work and emotional turmoil that have been our constant companions throughout these initial stages of transition. We hope, eventually, to know exactly who we are and what we're about. Reaching consensus on that should be fun!

September 4, 1988

HURRAY! HURRAY! It's September again and the doors of Monelison Junior High School opened and invited in 835 sixth through ninth graders. Some resisted, but we took them anyway.

At the end of the day we had our first faculty meeting. We were informed that we were becoming a middle school within five years. This was later changed to six years after someone realized that major surgery was going to take place on junior high schools.

The project of transition from junior high to middle school was left hanging until November.

November 16, 1988—Kickoff Meeting

Betty Moser, UniServ director, Eleanor Ross, instructional supervisor, and Ron Rasnake, president of the Amherst Education Association, made a presentation to our faculty on teacher empowerment and site-based decisionmaking. Because these ideas were new and innovative, the faculty's reactions were as varied as their personalities. Some reactions were:

- This is great! We have some control over what will take place in our school.
- Get real! This is just more work for us.
- What did they say? Ah, let someone else take care of it.

After the shock waves subsided, a serious discussion on how to get started took place. The first step was to develop a core committee. Moser described this committee as a group of people who would spearhead the transition. This group would learn to work together, reach consensus on all decisions, and become leaders of the great movement....Are there any volunteers?

Thirty-one teachers signed up for the core committee. Fifteen of them became very active, and 16 of them rode off into the sunset and were never heard from again. After the core committee met, we quickly developed our own definition: A core committee is a group of idealistic individuals who become known as Mr. and Mrs.

Middle School—they do all the work and receive abuse when things do not go right. However, the group forms a very close kinship. It's nice to have a bunch of people excited about doing new things.

Throughout the year, we continued to invite the entire faculty to our meetings. We encouraged their input because we wanted everyone to be a part of the process, and we did not want the reputation of being an elitist group who had all the answers. But if the truth be told, few people other than the core committee members attended the meetings, and the "elitist" reputation stuck to us like glue.

November 19, 1988—VEA-AEL Middle School Study Group Meeting

Fifteen teachers from Monelison attended a Saturday workshop at the Hilton in Lynchburg, VA. This workshop was presented by Betty Moser and JoAnn Karsh. The workshop provided training on how to conduct meetings and reach consensus. Members of the Prince Edward Middle School were also present, and it was nice to know we weren't in this alone. After a difficult day's work, we left with many new ideas. We also left feeling a bit apprehensive about this middle school thing and wondering what we had involved ourselves in. At the time of this writing, we are still wondering what we have gotten ourselves into.

November 29, 1988—First Core Committee Meeting

Where should we start? After much discussion, we decided that input from our entire faculty was needed in order to determine our school's strengths and weaknesses. We were ready to work and needed a project. We used the National Education Association Mastery in Learning Survey and made changes within the survey to meet the needs of our school. More than 50 percent of our faculty completed the survey. The results were tabulated in December and returned to the faculty in January. If you are wondering why it took us so long...well, changes started being made all around us and our input wasn't a part of those changes. We did not feel "empowered." We decided it was time to change our priorities and take action! The survey was put on hold until we could obtain information on what was going on around us that we were not privy to.

January 5, 1989—Middle School Visitation

Nine teachers from Monelison went to visit Prospect Heights Middle School in Orange County, VA. One carload of eager beavers arrived a bit late after a time-out on the side of Route 29 to change a flat tire. Never a dull moment for middle school teachers! When we all finally arrived we were given an overview of their program, which gave us some good ideas. We were impressed by the students' attitudes toward their school, high teacher morale, team teaching, the flexibility of their administrators, and the time-out program.

January 17, 1989—Middle School Course Offered (Free)

Our director of personnel informed us that we were not endorsed as middle school teachers. After we had taught these "squirrelly" kids for years, NOW we needed 103 hours to learn how to do what we had survived for years. Teachers trained in elementary education were "home free" except for one course in middle school. But those secondary people with a particular subject endorsement didn't really have the feel for middle school. After a few panicky people made their way to the office of the director of personnel and discovered they practically needed to enroll in a college program fulltime to keep their jobs, the final word was that most subject area teachers would need three courses: middle school curriculum, reading, and fine arts. Then we'd be ready for anything! More than half the faculty took the middle school course. How did we teach these kids before we had this course? Thank you, Dr. Harris, for your expertise in this field.

January 10, 1989—AEL Workshop

Four teachers volunteered along with two administrators to go to the Sheraton Inn in Lynchburg, VA, for this workshop. Prince Edward County teachers were also present. The purpose of the workshop was for us to share accomplishments and to discuss the documentation that would be made available to all schools

participating in the middle school transition. At this point we were a little confused. We volunteered with the understanding that we would be learning skills in documenting our progress for the core committee's benefit. After completing the workshop, we felt the study group involvement was additional work that would interfere with our goals at that time.

January 19, 1989—Middle School Visitation

We visited Prospect Heights Middle School again. This trip was uneventful with no flats, and we were still excited about what we saw!

January 25, 1989—The High School Makes a Decision

On a typical teacher workday (full of meeting) we received our first surprise! The HIGH SCHOOL decided they would go on a seven-period day. An administrative decision was made that all secondary schools would go on a seven-period day. The members of the core committee (those of us who really believed in what we were doing) went to our principal to voice our concerns and anger. With our school going on a seven-period day, a lot of in-house decisions would have to be made that affected us directly. Our concerns centered on how we could provide enough course offerings, who would teach them, and what these courses would be. Our principal was open to our concerns and guaranteed that he would support us. Our secondary supervisor met with us that afternoon to discuss our concerns. She was very supportive and understanding about our dilemma.

February 7, 1989—Sixth Grade Core Meeting

Sixth grade teachers met with the administration and decided the following: all sixth graders would have physical education every day, health would be taught by classroom teachers in order to stress family life skills, and sixth grade students taking band would be pulled from their social studies classes.

February 9, 1989—Ninth Grade Core Meeting

Problem: What to do with that extra period in our ninth grade schedule.

Solution: After much discussion, we decided to keep our basic required courses and add a number of noncredit courses. This was our first successful meeting under our own guidance and empowerment. We were well-organized. Will wonders never cease? Decisions were made and everyone left the meeting feeling more encouraged than discouraged.

February 13, 1989—Battle of the Century (Eighth Grade Core Meeting)

Purpose: To determine course offerings for the eighth grade for a seven-period day. This was when consensus broke down and compromise was forgotten! We picked our corners and chose our weapons!

DING! Round One—What do we do with this extra period? Whose subject is most important? English teacher exclaimed, "I want my advanced eighth graders for two periods, back-to-back, every day, for English and writing." Civics teacher shot back, "What about those eighth graders who take foreign language? They do not take civics; the extra period could be used for that." Science teacher hit the ceiling, "I could teach these kids something if I had them for two periods." Math teacher shook her head and said, "No comment!"

DING! Round Two—More heated debate!

DING! Round Three—Our secondary supervisor rose to the occasion and took over. To alleviate our frustrations, she devised three proposals, wrote them on the board, and suggested a vote. We were tired...we voted...we left! (TKO)

DING! Round Four—Next day! Mr. and Mrs. Middle School were irate. What happened to reaching a happy agreement? Why did we vote? Too late now. We took the proposal to the faculty and all Hades erupted. We sacrificed one of our core members (the English teacher) to please the masses. We decided that it was not right for so many of us to be unhappy with the proposal. So back to the drawing board, again!

February 16, 1989—Core Committee Meeting

THANK GOD FOR SNOW!! One-hour late school opening. We completed some core committee work.

DING! Round Five—Tempers were calm. **Consensus** was back in our vocabulary. A lot of hard work went into deciding the course offerings. Advanced students would utilize the extra period by taking writing one semester and civics one semester. The science teacher was given permission to use that period as lab time when needed, IF he promised to be nice to the English and civics teachers. All other eighth graders would take a double block of grammar and literature since civics was already in their schedule. The proposal was approved by the principal.

This was a good meeting. All were happy; we truly felt good about ourselves and our commitment to the middle school concept. We came to realize how difficult it is to reach true consensus. In-house agreements are part of the process. We also realized that there were other factors involved in making this such a frustrating time. All of these grade-level decisions on course offerings had to be made within a three-week period due to the high school's deadline for scheduling. Remember that more than 50 percent of us were enrolled in the middle school course. We were also taking on duties and responsibilities that were not ours, but had to be done. And, believe it or not, some of us were actually trying to do some teaching.

February 13, 1989—Seventh Grade Meeting

While the eighth grade teachers were getting their act together, the administrative staff made a decision.

Purpose: To determine course offerings for the seventh grade on a seven-period day. This was not one of our better meetings. Core members' ideas, opinions, and recommendations were not solicited. All course offerings were determined by the administration; then, seventh grade teachers were informed of those decisions. Well, for every step forward, you often take one step backward.

March 3, 1989—VEA Negotiations Conference and AEL Meeting

Ron Rasnake, AEA president and a member of the MJHS staff, made a presentation in Williamsburg, VA, on our progress to date in dealing with the middle school transition. He made it sound as though we really knew what we were doing...Sometimes this is true, but more often it's not!

March 8, 1989—Faculty Meeting-Mutiny

Purpose: Principal's goal was to develop a mission statement and verify eighth grade course offerings.

The core committee had not been informed about developing a mission statement at this time. We felt that we should be more involved in this process. There had to be a more organized way to present this to our faculty, so we volunteered to organize the plan for developing our mission statement.

The principal then turned the meeting over to the eighth grade guidance counselor, who read off a list of noncredit courses that would be presented to the eighth grade students. Many of the courses that the core committee had previously selected were deleted. An outspoken core committee member piped in, "Where did this list come from?" We truly felt that all the time and effort we had put into the course offering meetings were down the drain. We voiced our opposition to the listing and asked for a 24-hour delay in the presentation of these courses to the eighth graders. We struck out.

As the faculty meeting ended, many teachers voiced their concern about not being informed about things that had been discussed during the meeting. As a group, we decided that there were steps that should be taken to keep the "entire" faculty informed.

To avoid failures to communicate in the future, the following recommendations were implemented:

The Ten Commandments of Communication

1. Thou shalt establish a specific meeting date.
2. Thou shalt establish a specific meeting place.
3. Thou shalt establish a time to start and a time to end each meeting.
4. Thou shalt establish an agenda to keep on task.

5. Thou shalt appoint a facilitator for each meeting.
6. Thou shalt appoint a recorder for each meeting.
7. Thou shalt establish a central location for housing all core committee data.
8. Thou shalt encourage all faculty members to be involved.
9. Thou shalt set short- and long-range goals.
10. Thou shalt create an informational bulletin board.

A facilitator guided each meeting and kept core members on task. We selected two facilitators to conduct meetings when the entire faculty was involved. At the end of our core committee meetings, one of us volunteered to facilitate the next meeting. A recorder kept minutes of all the meetings. We established a pool of five recorders who shared the responsibility.

March 9, 1989—Core Committee Meeting—a.m.

SNOW!! School delayed two hours. It's not 24 hours, but we'll take it!

In two hours' time, we scurried around and reinstated THE ORIGINAL eighth grade course offerings and wrote course descriptions. A list was composed of those teachers who wanted to teach the noncredit courses.

SHOWDOWN TIME...The proper and improper way to inform your eighth grade students about the changes in next year's schedule....

Two methods were used by one of the guidance counselors to inform our students about the seven-period day and the NEW noncredit courses. Both attempts caused utter confusion and chaos. On the first attempt, all 200+ eighth graders were called en masse to the cafeteria and given incorrect information (Improper Approach). In an emergency attempt to correct the morning catastrophe, a second mass calling was made at the end of the school day, and incorrect information was distributed again. (NO! We have not learned from our earlier mistake.) It was now time for a quick fix. So after school, two teachers designed the PROPER APPROACH to scheduling.

In order to ensure that schedules reflected student needs, we would schedule students in their English classes. This would provide students with the time and opportunity to ask questions. All eighth grade students were scheduled by an English teacher, while a guidance counselor was available for consultation.

Scheduling in small groups during English classes was a total success!!! We will try this approach next year with all grade levels.

March 9, 1989 (Again)—Core Committee Meeting-p.m.

Purpose: To organize the development of the Mission Statement.

We discussed what a mission statement is. A mission statement consists of what YOU feel your school should be all about. This statement should be brief, but at the same time, reflect your school's goal. Next, we discussed whom we wanted to be involved in the development of our statement. We decided to include the entire school staff, student representatives from each grade level, representatives from the community, and our PTO president. Letters were to be sent to all participants, inviting them to take part in the development of our mission statement. All participants were asked to reply by a given date. Our last task was to figure out how we could bring a large number of people to consensus. (Good questions, huh?) We decided to set up 12 small groups consisting of staff members and a community representative, each with a core facilitator. The students would be placed in their own group with a core facilitator. This way, they could work together as a group and not feel the least bit intimidated by their teachers.

The task of putting ALL of this together was given to our school's "organizer." Every school has one, and this "organizer" just lovessss...to do this type of work!

Our "organizer" established the following plan for the mission statement meeting:

1. Set a time to begin and end the meeting.
2. Provided name tags for all participants.
3. Assigned each group a table to meet at by

color coding name tags with a disk of the same color on the table.

4. Gave each group's facilitator a folder with all of the information needed to facilitate the group. This folder contained the following items: a definition of mission statement, the school's philosophy, a list of the characteristics of the middle school child, and index cards for each group member to write on.
5. Asked each group to select a recorder to write down all material and present to the total group at the end of the small group discussions.
6. Provided refreshments at the beginning of the meeting. Our School-Community Association provided refreshments and their officers were in charge of the refreshment table.

March 9, 1989 (Again and Again)—Middle School Conference

Two teachers missed all the "FUN" today! They were in Charlottesville, VA, presenting our school's incentive plan. This plan (GAIN) encourages and rewards students to improve their grades each six weeks.

NOTE: Unbelievable accomplishments were made on March 9, 1989. This day will go down in history in our hearts, our minds, and our souls.

March 14, 1989—Middle School Visitation

Several teachers visited Binford Middle School, Richmond, VA. We were impressed by their approach to heterogeneous grouping and the high expectations for all students.

March 22, 1989—The "Biggie"

The school's faculty, administration, staff, and student core committee joined with invited guests from our community to establish the foundation for our misson statement.

Participants met in small groups facilitated by a representative of the core committee. Each group member wrote a statement that expressed his or her views of what Monelison Middle School should provide for its students. After discussing these ideas, each group agreed on one consensus mission statement. These 12 statements were then presented to the entire group, and key concepts were identified and listed on a chalkboard. This listing was given to the core committee, who would review it and create one mission statement to be presented and accepted at a later date.

The core committee handed over the organization of the school's motto to the student core committee. It was valuable to us to have input from our students. They quickly made us realize what is important, and they got a BIG kick out of being a part of the action.

April 11, 1989—AEL Meeting in Farmville

Monelison and Prince Edward met again to discuss our progress to date on middle school transition. At this meeting, we finally realized the depth of our involvement in AEL. We would write this report that you are now reading to help your school change into a middle school. Aren't you lucky! If you can wade your way through this, you are halfway there. Good luck!

April 12, 1989—Adoption of the Mission Statement

The mission statement was adopted unanimously by the faculty, students, and guests. A large group consensus at last!

The mission of Monelison Middle School is **"to provide a caring atmosphere that challenges all individuals to be the best that they can be."**

After the adoption of the mission statement, our student core committee was given the task of selecting a motto for our school. The student core committee met and designed the following plan.

- Each homeroom teacher received an instructional memo on what a motto is and how to develop one.
- Each grade level had a decorated box in which to place their suggestions (one week).
- At the end of the week, the student core committee collected all entries and submitted them to the core committee.

- The core committee and the student core committee then met to determine our school's motto.

The effort was received well by our faculty the following week. Our motto is "Striving to be the best."

April 12, 1989—Middle School Visitation

Five teachers visited Bassett Middle School in Bassett, VA. The principal and guidance counselor presented their program. We were impressed by their teacher advisory program and the flexibility of their schedule.

May 12, 1989—Middle School Visitation

Five teachers visited Henley Middle School in Albemarle County. Some great things are happening at Henley. Their activity period, slide schedule, and approach to discipline scored points with us. Our visiting team was also impressed by the rapport between the administration and students.

We'd like to thank all the schools who invited us to visit their buildings this year. We gained much insight into the world of middle school from our visits.

SURPRISE! SURPRISE! Guess who's getting a new principal and a new assistant principal for the 1989-90 school year! WE ARE!!! We hope that these new administrators will work with us on teacher empowerment and site-based decisionmaking.

All core committee work STOPS. Beam us up, Scottie! Send our checks!!!

Until next year...which should offer us more challenges than we've ever imagined. This will be the last year ninth graders will belong to us. Along with their exit, we'll be losing part of our staff—the teacher shuffle! We'd like to look into the crystal ball to see if we'll all still have our sanity next year at this time....But we're going to have fun amidst all the chaos!

June 15, 1989

REFLECTIONS...the sun is warm...the ocean waves are inviting... the lounge chairs are comfortable...life is good. As a faculty, we've grown both professionally and personally. We've learned some valuable lessons. We feel much more a part of our school because we've been an important part of the initial change process. We've become closer as a faculty. We've learned to deal with the occasional disagreements and still be friends who genuinely care about each other, our students, and our school. We think we're on the right road. We took some detours and a few dead-end streets, but we always managed to get back on track—usually in the fast lane!

We wish you good luck in your endeavors. Fasten your seat belts; you're in for quite a ride! If we can be of assistance, we're going on the road in the fall with our lecture tour. We have a great panel: the school organizer who's always in control, a laid-back president who thinks everything is great, a munchkin with an attitude problem, and the sacrificial English teacher. Call 804-846-1307—we're a lot of fun!

Helpful Hints

by Paige DeCarlo, Beverly Jones, Ken Payne, Ron Rasnake, Horace Rice, Pam Rosenberger, Eleanor Ross, and Cheryl Sprouce

These hints to the wise may assist you in your transitional phase:

- Keep your students' needs #1 in your planning.
- Visit all model schools (if possible) and write reports of what you saw and liked. Present these reports to your faculty and see what programs can be adapted to your school.
- Keep everybody well-informed as you go through your transition.
- Be open to suggestions.
- Work together as a group.
- Remember group consensus can be STRESSFUL.
- Designate people to remind you that disagreements are often for the common good.

- Always THANK your math teachers for instructing you (step by step...) on the Mighty Word Processor!!

Success Highlights

We are enclosing highlights of our MOST successful projects undertaken this school year.

- Forty-six teachers from Monelison took part in the Middle School Curriculum class.
- A total of 25 teachers visited all four model schools.
- We wrote our school's mission statement and motto.
- We developed a successful agenda for group process. Listed below is an example, the agenda of our mission statement meeting.

Mission Setting Meeting Agenda

3:15 - 3:30	Refreshments
3:30 - 3:32	Welcome—Principal
3:32 - 3:34	Purpose—Facilitator I
3:34 - 3:40	"What is a Mission Statement"—Facilitator II
3:40 - 3:45	Review the School's Philosophy (Individual groups)
3:45 - 3:50	Each member of the group will complete the following statement on a 3" x 5" index card: "The Mission of Monelison Middle is to . . ."
3:50 - 4:00	Reading of individual statements in small groups.
4:00 - 4:15	Synthesis of statements within small groups.
4:15 - 4:30	The Recorder of each small group will read aloud its group mission statement. All statements will be recorded by the core recorder on the chalkboard.
4:30 - 4:45	Aggregation of group mission statements into components recommended to the core committee and used in the Monelison Mission Statement.
4:45 - 5:00	Closure by Facilitator I and II

PRINCE EDWARD MIDDLE SCHOOL CHRONOLOGY

by Mary Baylis, Angeles Christian,
Becky Gulliford, Ann Gussett,
Barbara Toney, and Raye Tupper

The process of gathering information and ideas for the restructuring of Prince Edward Middle School began in August 1988. The middle school is located in Prince Edward County, considered to be the Heart of Virginia. Presently, the middle school consists of grades five, six, and seven. The fifth grade is housed at the Farmville Annex located two miles east of the main complex near the downtown area.

In this rural setting, the Heart of Virginia, the 1988-89 school year had begun officially when our superintendent came to address the middle school teachers. He started this meeting by informing the faculty that the structure of the middle school would change, and that staff would share in the responsibility for this process. With this revelation came feelings of excitement, apprehension, disbelief, confusion, and amazement. Immediately, questions were asked of the superintendent for which there were no answers. His repeated response was: "This is up to the members of this faculty. These questions will be answered by the middle school staff."

In August 1988, another important meeting had taken place of which the middle school faculty was not aware. At this meeting, the assistant principal discussed with the superintendent the possibility of forming a three-year committee to develop the restructuring plan of the middle school, as well as the possibility of hiring substitutes to enable the committee members to visit model middle schools.

It was encouraging to learn that the superintendent felt that the restructuring process was enough of a priority to approve hiring substitutes for this purpose. He also suggested that the two building administrators visit model sites first to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each school. Once the strengths and weaknesses were identified, these model sites could be observed by the appropriate teachers.

During the weeks following this meeting on restructuring the middle school, there were many discussions about making our teachers aware of what is involved in the change, but not until the next faculty meeting did the staff begin to realize the magnitude of the work involved in the restructuring process.

September 12, 1988, was the next faculty meeting. At this time, the principal and assistant principal expressed their feelings of excitement and jubilation that the teachers would have the opportunity to visit those sites and develop the middle school program. They asked for signatures of teachers interested in working on the three-year project and received 16. It was pointed out that the process would be very time-consuming and would involve a serious commitment on the part of each faculty member. The process would be like taking a graduate course over an extended period of time.

On September 26, there was a meeting of the principal, assistant principal, and the UniServ director of the Virginia Education Association. From the meeting emerged this focus: If the middle school was willing to document its restructuring process, monies would be set aside by the VEA to assist teachers by providing released time for the development of the document. Our administrators felt relieved to know there was monetary help for the project.

Three days after this meeting, our principals began visiting the model middle school sites. The first school to be visited by our assistant principal was Prospect Heights Middle School in Orange County. October 9 found our assistant

principal at Hines Middle School in Norfolk, VA. Then, our principal traveled to Bassett Middle School in Henry County on October 12, 1988. As a result of these visits, the administrators were able to note the strengths and weaknesses of these model schools that would help give direction to our restructuring process. From the faculty, two six-member teams were selected to visit the Bassett and Hines Middle Schools. Both administrators accompanied the teams on their tours.

Time passed quickly and October 3, 1988, arrived. The second scheduled faculty meeting was held. At this meeting, other concepts regarding the restructuring of the middle school were discussed. Also, interested staff members signed up to work on various committees, such as school climate, scheduling, constructing teaching teams, and developing curriculum.

Since change is a highly personal experience, the first six-member visitation team met with the faculty on November 14, 1988, to relay its impressions of the Bassett visit. The faculty appeared impressed with several facets of this sharing session. Some of the impressive features about the middle school concept that our staff noted were: two planning periods for effective teaming, the counseling services, school decor, awards, noise level, the exploratory activities, landscaping, and art work.

After sharing and discussing, and while emotions and comments seemed very positive, the assistant principal had the group prioritize the above list according to what teachers would like to do first. The faculty named guidance, scheduling, and teaming as its main foci. However, it was the consensus of the group that the award system could be instituted immediately. The Principal's Award was implemented the following week to raise the morale of students and teachers.

Sometime prior to November 19, teachers were notified of the "Developing a Team" workshop to be held in Lynchburg, VA. This workshop was conducted by the Virginia UniServ directors. Eight faculty members and two administrators from Prince Edward County attended this workshop. Several faculty members from Monelison Junior High School and the UniServ director from Amherst County also attended.

This workshop served as a get-acquainted session for the two schools and established the premise that working as a team is more than two groups getting together, but promotes the idea that getting all members involved means being in tune with each other's academic, personal, and professional lives.

As Christmas vacation was nearing, our December 12 mandatory faculty meeting was held and conducted by the VEA UniServ director. The staff were guided through a mindmapping activity about middle school items we would keep and those we would discard. The results of this activity were copied and displayed on large newsprint for our future reference. Also, we were given the opportunity to participate in an AEL-VEA research writing project. Five teachers signed up to participate in this project and, thus, emerged the core committee of the middle school restructuring process.

The Christmas season, with all of its activities, kept the committee busy until after vacation. This break gave the committee members time to relax and reflect on the progress to date.

The committee reconvened during January in Lynchburg. The group met with the AEL coordinator, the UniServ director, and the Monelison teachers. The AEL coordinator gave an introduction to AEL to establish the purpose of the writing project, which will run concurrently with the middle school restructuring for the current school year. Progress reports were also made by each school. During this time, the Prince Edward committee realized it had several important items to consider.

Upon our return to school on January 27, we immediately met with the assistant superintendent. We requested that a course on middle school curriculum be offered in the fall of 1989 for interested faculty of Prince Edward County. The assistant superintendent asked the committee to make a presentation at the Professional Development Council on February 2, 1989, and the request was granted at that time.

The committee met with the principal to seek his help in arranging a meeting between eighth grade faculty and core committee members as soon as possible. In response to the committee's request, our principal invited the eighth grade teachers to a breakfast on our workday early in March. During this social time, the middle school faculty enjoyed getting to know six to eight members of the high school staff.

At the conclusion of this workday, the core committee went "on the road again" to Williamsburg, VA, for a workshop. This workshop, "The Challenge of Collaboration," focused on empowerment of teachers. Empowerment of this nature allows teachers to make decisions about the restructuring process.

At the next faculty meeting, an overview and update of the restructuring were presented to all faculty. At this time all faculty were requested to view the Virginia Department of Education middle school videotapes. The importance of viewing the tapes before the March 20 faculty meeting was stressed so that all would have a background for writing the Prince Edward County Middle School mission statement. The core committee had viewed the tapes previously. Video recorders were set up at both school locations, and the tapes were viewed during lunch period by the majority of the faculty. Also in March, the core committee met to plan a program for the eighth grade faculty and separated reading materials acquired from AEL into categories. The materials were housed in the library so they would be accessible to all faculty members.

When the core committee traveled to the high school to make the presentation to the eighth grade faculty, they were disappointed that no high school faculty attended the meeting; however, the meeting turned to a positive note when the assistant principal of the high school arrived. The following items were discussed:

- including technical courses as well as traditional courses in the curriculum;
- housing and transportation of the eighth grade between the high school, middle school, and vocational school;
- ways to gain the interest of eighth grade teachers and other high school faculty;
- mandatory faculty meetings in which the VDE middle school videotape, "Focus on Virginia Model," would be viewed;
- need for a survey to ascertain the interest level of high school faculty;
- including some of the eighth grade faculty on the next visitation; and
- methods of scheduling.

The next day a committee member attended the school administrators' meeting to give an overview of what would be presented at the April School Board meeting. In April, three committee members reported to the Board on the progress of the restructuring program. Board members were supportive and interested.

Also in March, a committee member and assistant principal met to develop the procedure that would be used with staff members in constructing the mission statement. On March 20, the middle school faculty used the group process, three rotations ranging from small to large groups, to develop a mission statement for the school. The first rotation used four-member teams to develop five statements. The four-member teams expanded to eight-member teams, and the eight-member teams reached consensus on five mission statements from the original list of ten. In the last rotation, the eight-member teams expanded to sixteen-member teams, and the statements were again reduced to five. At the conclusion of the third rotation, the ten mission statements were written on newsprint for everyone to see. Because dismissal was promised at 4:30 p.m., this was as far as the faculty progressed at the first meeting. Even though the group was dismissed, many faculty members lingered to share their views about the fun they had in developing the mission statement. The positive comments carried over to the next day marking this as one of the high points of the restructuring process. The committee felt good about this and the support given earlier by the School Board.

The staff condensed and completed the

mission statement and received faculty approval of it.

Reflections on progress were made by the committee for the 1988-89 school year. However, the core committee did not feel the need to complete the restructuring process within the school year due to the fact that the superintendent had stated that Prince Edward County would not become a newly functioning middle school until 1991 or later. This delay was due to an ongoing building program of the middle school which will not be completed until that time.

With great anticipation, the core committee continued the identification of its goals for the ensuing years. Before its departure for the summer, the committee organized a community task force, expanded the core committee, and designed a structure for the academic teams for the next year.

The core committee's recommendations for other schools beginning the restructuring process are as follows:

- Begin early.
- Involve as many aspects of the community as possible.
- Set up regular timed meetings with clearly stated purposes.
- Use available resources.
- Work together and keep a sense of humor!

PROGRESS REFLECTIONS ANALYSIS

The "VEA-AEL Middle School Study Group Survey of Progress Reflections," developed by AEL staff, consisted of 15 open-ended items focused on the obstacles and accomplishments experienced in the first year of restructuring to form a middle school. Each of the 12 study group members received the survey and cover letter (see Appendix B) asking each to provide individual perspectives and return the completed survey to AEL staff for analysis. To enrich data gathered from school chronologies with individual perceptions, survey respondents were asked to provide examples of decisions and actions, as well as perspectives on their experience in the restructuring process. To summarize school and individual perspectives, AEL staff analyzed responses from the four Prince Edward Middle School respondents and from the three respondents from Monelison Junior High School.

Commonalities and differences in the reflections of study group members from the two project schools, as well as their personal reactions to the restructuring experience which emerged from the data, are reported below following each survey question. (Numbers in parentheses indicate the frequency of responses.)

1. **Why did your faculty begin restructuring toward a middle school configuration? Who were the main initiators of the project (positions only)? What percentage of the faculty initially supported the project? Was there administrative or teacher resistance to the project? If so, what were the reasons for resistance?**

   Respondents from both schools indicated that between 45 percent and 100 percent of their faculties initially supported the project. Little, if any, vocalized resistance from faculty or administration was noted. Also, both groups indicated that a much smaller percentage of the faculty actually became involved in the day-to-day restructuring project work of the core committees.

   The two groups differed somewhat in their perceptions of why their faculty became involved in the restructuring project and who the main initiators of the project were. Monelison group members listed two reasons for their school's involvement: "the chance to be in the forefront of change" and "encouragement by the UniServ director." Accordingly, Monelison members listed the Amherst Education Association president, UniServ director, teachers, and administrators as initiators. One Prince Edward group member mentioned the UniServ director as an initiator while others listed superintendent (3), principal (2), assistant principal (1), and state department of education (1) as project initiators. Prince Edward representatives also indicated that their faculties became involved in restructuring because of the superintendent's directive or a state department mandate.

2. **What improvements did faculty expect through restructuring to a middle school? Were there factors about your present school that you hoped to change? What were they?**

   Responses from members of both faculties to this question concerning expected improvements and changes were largely related to school climate (e.g., more cohesive staff, more involvement in decisionmaking, more student-oriented environment, improving morale through improved school climate, expanding student guidance services, adding exploratory or noncredit courses). Both

groups wanted to change to a team approach to teaching, alter scheduling, and improve student-teacher relationships.

3. **"Restructuring in the Middle Grades" (Virginia Department of Education, 1988) suggests that each faculty conduct a self-assessment to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement. What sources of school data (test scores, indicators of student socioeconomic status, attendance records, parent involvement records, grading patterns, etc.) have your faculty or core committee examined? Have you conducted a survey of faculty, administrators, parents, community, and/or students? Were other methods of self-assessment used during the first year? Please describe any formal or informal methods.**

Only one study group member mentioned examining school data sources to identify school strengths and weaknesses. All other members listed the National Education Association's Mastery in Learning Survey as their school's method of self-assessment. Only school staff were reported to have responded to the survey.

4. **"Restructuring in the Middle Grades" further suggests that schools study and review research on developmental characteristics of early adolescents; effective teaching, learning, and grouping practices; and uses of technology as an instructional and productivity tool with special emphasis on applications for remediations and for assisting at-risk students. Was a review of research begun during the first year of restructuring at your school? What sources of information were used (VEA, VDE, etc.)? Was the total faculty involved in reviewing some or all of the materials obtained? What methods were used to enhance faculty access to information? For what purposes was the information used or shared?**

Some review of appropriate research was conducted in both schools; however, the total faculties were not involved except in viewing Virginia Department of Education videotapes on the restructuring process. VEA, AEL, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, the central office, an assistant principal, and a graduate course were mentioned as sources of information. Finding time and space to locate and display information was reported as a common problem, but a graduate class for Monelison teachers, paid for by the school board, and visits to model middle schools enhanced faculty access to information. Purposes for using the information were to acquaint staff with the restructuring process, to "open eyes" to middle school concepts, and to provide a basis for preparation of a mission statement.

5. **How was the structure of the core committee conceptualized? How were members selected? Of the total number of teachers at your school, how many are active members of the committee? Were leaders identified, or did they emerge from the group? Are school or division administrators regularly involved in group meetings? Is a division of responsibilities among group members apparent and/or effective? Will the group remain the same for next year? What methods are used to obtain total faculty involvement in restructuring decisions? Do members represent and report to one or more specified groups of faculty members (grade level, department, etc.)? After one year of work, is there unity between the core committee and the faculty? Why or why not?**

Although both schools conceptualized the core committee as a volunteer group to spearhead restructuring, methods of selecting members of the core committee and the extent of their involvement differed between schools.

Monelison respondents indicated that their core committee was open to all faculty, but that 15 of the 65 teachers actually became active on the core committee. Prince Edward respondents listed "5," "6," and "one-third of the faculty" as active members. One Prince Edward study group member explained that

16 teachers had volunteered at a faculty meeting to visit model school sites. The administration selected six of these volunteers, who later comprised the core committee. Another Prince Edward teacher provided a different view: that teachers volunteered for the core committee after a workshop with the UniServ director, indicating that the VEA-AEL study group members were the core committee and that others of the original 16 volunteers "Have not been utilized."

There also appeared to be differences between the two schools in perceptions about core committee leadership and division of responsibilities. Although two Prince Edward study group members said a core committee leader "had emerged midyear," other Prince Edward respondents felt there was no leader. These teachers also stated that they felt "a leader should have been designated" and mentioned "lack of leadership" as a cause of "faculty apathy" for the project. On the other hand, Monelison study group members indicated leadership had emerged from the core committee, and they described their plan for alternating group leader and recorder for core committee meetings.

On the topic of administrative involvement in core committee meetings, the schools were in agreement that although administrators were "cooperative and congenial," they were not actively involved. All respondents voiced the need for greater administrative involvement in and support for the restructuring project.

Respondents from both project schools described similar methods for communication between core committee and faculty, as well as for obtaining faculty involvement in restructuring decisions. Both core committees held open meetings and reported from time to time to different grade levels or "factions." Faculty in both schools voted on all core committee recommendations during regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Although both schools reported good involvement of faculty and unity between core committee and faculty on the development of their mission statements, study group members expressed concern about faculty apathy otherwise.

Members from both schools indicated there would be some change in the membership of their core committees for the 1989-90 school year.

6. **Reflecting on decisions or actions made by the faculty and/or core committee during the first year of restructuring, which were the most important? Which actions or decisions were the most controversial? What actions or decisions, in your opinion, will be most important for the next school year?**

   Reflecting on decisions or actions made by the faculty and/or core committee during the first year of restructuring, study group members agreed that developing a mission statement and making changes in scheduling or class size were the year's most controversial actions. Interestingly, these two actions were also included in both schools' lists of most important decisions. Also included under most important decisions were "prioritizing area of focus," "team teaching," and "expanding guidance services."

7. **Thinking about the processes of core committee and total faculty meetings, please describe those most often used. How were items for the agenda selected? Did all members know the meeting's agenda before they arrived? How were decisions reached? Were decisions final or did they require approval of others not attending the meeting? If so, who? Describe school administrators' roles regarding the core committee? Were decisions representative of general faculty opinions? Could faculty members not on the planning group add items to the agenda or bring up new business? Did you receive training in methods which were then used in meetings? Which methods were most effective? What were**

your personal reactions to group participation this year?

The most common process used in core committee meetings by both schools was prioritizing agenda items. In faculty meetings at both schools, decisions were reached by consensus. All but one respondent indicated that faculty decisions were final. The one dissenting response was "final approval by the superintendent."

The two schools differed in their use of agendas. Monelison teachers stated that all core committee members knew the agenda before meetings; however, some Prince Edward teachers said "yes" to the question while others said there were no formal agendas except for the faculty meeting to develop the mission statement. Members of both schools indicated that core committee agendas were open to additions and input from faculty. The following survey responses illustrate administrative roles in core committee at both schools:

- "Administrators allowed freedom to do what was best for the school."
- "Administrators provided class coverage (substitutes) for core committee when released time meetings were held."
- "Administrators allowed core committee members to visit other sites."

All respondents offered positive responses to the training conducted by VEA UniServ directors in group process. Although some of the methods learned in the workshop were applied in both schools, at least one teacher stated, "We will use more next year." Respondents from both schools indicated meetings were more successful when the training format for group process was used. Some teachers also voiced the need to revisit previous training in group process skills and to have further training in assertiveness and conflict management. Other personal reactions to group participation included:

- "Group participation was good. We grew together."
- "Teachers seem unwilling to move with the flow. Many feel faculty will not have final say in middle school structure."
- "We need more feedback from other members of core committee who visited schools."
- "The past year's work was challenging."

8. **What were/are the biggest obstacles facing the restructuring process at your school? How did the core committee confront these set-backs or what plans have been discussed to confront them in the next year?**

Time was listed as an obstacle to the restructuring process by teachers from both schools. However, responses to this question differed between Prince Edward and Monelison teachers. Some Prince Edward teachers responded:

- "We do not have a copy of (VDE) middle school guidelines. Since there is no leader, no one has taken the responsibility to get a copy."
- "We need responsible team members, money, and space to provide services and activities, and teacher certification (for middle school)."
- "Lack of knowledge of preadolescents and state guidelines."
- "Inexperienced administrators."

To confront these obstacles, Prince Edward teachers mentioned the following plans for the next school year.

- "The core committee is working to provide better means of utilizing resources (e.g., creative schedule)."
- "A graduate class will be offered in 1989-90 to certify teachers for middle school."

Monelison teachers listed the following obstacles to the restructuring process:

- "scheduling seven-period day (for grades 6-8) with ninth grade still in the building"

- "lack of trust"
- "fatigue (toward the end of the year)
- "communication breakdown"

To confront some of the obstacles this year, Monelison core committee members worked with administrators and guidance counselors to develop a schedule and course list. They also planned a faculty cookout "to ease frustration and fatigue at the end of the year." For the next year (1989-90) they foresaw the need for "better communication through more structure and focus in core committee." One teacher also stated, "New administrators will have a positive impact."

9. **What were the greatest accomplishments of your school's first year of restructuring? Explain why these were significant. Have students seen any impact of your efforts in the classroom or school? Please explain.**

Although there were some obstacles to the restructuring process, respondents also felt there were significant accomplishments. Leading the list for both schools were developing the mission statement, improving scheduling, or beginning team teaching. One Monelison teacher listed "learning to deal with the new role of decisionmaker." Prince Edward teachers added the following accomplishments to their list:

- "core committee in place"
- "members accepting responsibility and visiting sites"
- "cooperative, congenial administrators"
- "faculty knowledge of the restructuring process"
- "meeting with another school that is restructuring"
- "adding incentives for students"

In explaining the impact of core committee efforts that students had seen, a Prince Edward teacher said, "When a substitute came, students knew we were working on restructuring for next year." Monelison teachers offered these explanations:

- "General school climate has shown improvement."
- "Students always were considered first in planning."
- "They were told about restructuring and many took part."

10. **Please state the middle school mission statement(s) developed this year. Briefly describe the process used to develop the statements. Include discussion of who was involved and how their involvement was obtained.**

Respondents from Monelison provided the mission statement for their school. (Mission statement is included in the school chronology and not repeated here.) Prince Edward staff had not yet finalized their mission statement. The process for developing the mission statement differed between the two schools. At Prince Edward only the school staff was involved. The "from group to team" process, which had been demonstrated in a VEA workshop, was employed. At Monelison, school staff, students, parents, and community members were involved in the process and the mission's wording was reached by consensus. Prepared agendas were used by both schools for this meeting. (A detailed account of each school's meeting to develop a mission statement is given in the school's chronology.)

11. **What are the restructuring goals of the core committee and/or faculty for 1989-90? By this time next year, what do you hope to have accomplished? Will the current processes used be effective in reaching these goals? What other steps may have to be taken?**

Looking ahead to the 1989-90 school year, both groups planned to employ the same processes and expand their use to reach new restructuring goals. Although both schools had not finalized their goals for 1989-90 by

the time of the survey, several were listed. Monelison's goals included evaluating, scheduling, and having a plan for restructuring in place. Prince Edward educators listed the following goals:

- to have a 16-member, functioning core committee,
- to involve parents and community on core committee,
- to have eighth grade faculty involved,
- to have all faculty visit model schools,
- to have a large percentage of the faculty take a course in middle school curriculum,
- to become aware of the restructuring process,
- to implement team teaching for other grade levels,
- to develop a library of resources for teachers, and
- to set up time for structured work on the project.

12. What have you learned about yourself and about school-based decisionmaking because of your active involvement with the project? If you were to change any of your actions in connection with work on restructuring, what would those changes be?

The following responses illustrate what educators in the study group reported learning about themselves and about site-based decisionmaking:

- "I enjoy working with others to improve the school—the opportunity to be part of the action. This makes me feel good, especially when it deals with students."
- "I hope others ask more readily and assertively for my assistance."
- "Consensus is important. Stay organized. Don't give up."
- "I can be more laid back when necessary. The school won't stop running if my ideas aren't implemented. Faculty members don't believe what they want matters."
- "To remain assertive yet flexible."
- "My input is important. Accomplish things through discussion."
- "Teachers are not yet equipped for decisionmaking. The mind-set is still top down."
- "There is not enough time for teachers to be involved. Work needs to be done after school. This takes commitment."

Some teachers listed changes they would make if they were to change any of their actions concerning restructuring.

- "Make sure there is a leader. Don't talk as much and don't assume as much responsibility."
- "Actively involve parents, students, and eighth grade teachers."
- "Have each teacher take an active part in meeting goals."
- "Change time of day we meet."
- "Add more people to core committee."

13. How satisfied are you with project progress at this point? What needs to be done for you to be more satisfied? Do you feel more or less hopeful or enthusiastic than when you began the project? Please explain.

The following responses to this question assessing teacher satisfaction with their restructuring project indicated Monelison teachers felt a high degree of satisfaction:

- "I'm optimistic!"
- "Quite satisfied."
- "I feel good; pain and gain; much has been learned; staff sees merit."

Monelison teachers did not respond with any needs to increase their satisfaction, and all responses indicated they were more hopeful/enthusiastic now than when they began the project.

Responses concerning satisfaction from Prince Edward teachers ranged from "moder-

ately satisfied" to "not very satisfied." One respondent said, "Progress marginal but good." Another expressed frustration with the time and effort needed for the project and stated, "This is the internal conflict between teaching and 'being professional'." However, the same teacher stated, "I am gratified so much was achieved." Two other Prince Edward respondents indicated they were less hopeful/enthusiastic now than when the project began.

Prince Edward educators also commented on changes they would make in the restructuring work:

- "Establish guidelines/structure."
- "Have a project coordinator, released time, regular meetings with broader agendas."
- "Need to initiate more and demand more from staff. Have principal do more so I can do more work on the project."

14. What recommendations would you make to other teachers and administrators beginning restructuring toward a middle school organization?

Reflecting on their accomplishments and frustrations during the first year of the restructuring project, educators in the study group offered the following recommendations to others beginning the restructuring process: (Numbers in parentheses indicate frequencies of responses.)

- "Visit model sites." (3)
- "Hold scheduled meetings with specific agendas." (2)
- "Go slow; assign tasks to as many as possible; designate small groups/name chairs." (2)
- "Take time for the process; work together; talk a lot; involve all factions early on in frequent/forthright discussion; deal with pressure/frustration assertively." (3)
- "Back decisions with research." (2)
- "Know expectations/requirements for middle schools." (2)
- "Take a good middle school course." (1)
- "Set definite/realistic goals (short- and long-range)." (1)
- "Emphasize to all that the project is serious and not to be taken lightly." (1)
- "Be prepared for many hours of hard work." (1)
- "Don't be discouraged." (1)

15. What is your view to date of participation in the VEA-AEL study group? What changes would make the group's work a more rewarding professional development experience for you?

Teachers from both schools shared positive views of their participation in the VEA-AEL study group. In summary, they felt the group provided awareness, assisted them in setting goals, provided materials and training that were essential to the project's success, and helped individuals identify their roles as team members.

The teachers also suggested changes that would make the group's work more rewarding:

- "Present a clearer statement of purpose and expectations at the beginning."
- "Provide more time for discussion between the two schools."
- "Allow more time for evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of ideas offered by group members."
- "Don't give so many deadlines. Allow focus of the first year to be on documenting the process and talking about it rather than producing a document. Assemble material in the second year."

Conclusion

The chronologies and progress reflections related by study group members from Monelison Junior High School and Prince Edward Middle School provide a portrait of restructuring for other school faculties to reflect upon as they begin restructuring middle schools. The experi-

ences, concerns, accomplishments, and recommendations recorded by these teachers indicate their recognition of the obstacles encountered in the restructuring process; their successful amelioration of problems; and their awareness of the continuing need to enhance faculty involvement through improved organization, leadership, and communication. Study group members expressed overall satisfaction with the progress made during the first year of restructuring at their respective middle schools. They believe that other school faculties may prepare themselves for the rigors of restructuring by reflecting on the record of day-to-day activities, the reflections on progress, and the future plans to maintain and extend their accomplishments offered in this volume. For further information on these restructuring projects, contact the schools directly at: Monelison Middle School, Daniels Drive, Madison Heights, VA 24572, 804/846-1307; Prince Edward Middle School, Route 5, Box 680, Farmville, VA 23901, 804/392-9594.

REFERENCES

Middle Schools

Achilles, C. M. (Ed.). (1984). *The PSCR middle grades study: 1983. A study of selected schools containing combinations of grades 5-9 with some comparisons to national study results.* Knoxville, TN: Public Schools for Cooperative Research. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 252 301)

Alexander, W. M., & McEwin, C. K. (1986). Middle level schools—their status and their promise. *NASSP Bulletin, 70*(486), 90-95.

Beady, C., Slavin, R., & Fennessey, G. (1981). Alternative student evaluation structures and a focused schedule of instruction in an inner-city junior high school. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 73*(4), 518-523.

Becker, H. J. (1987). *Addressing the needs of different groups of early adolescents: Effects of varying school and classroom organizational practices on students from different social backgrounds and abilities* Report (No. 16), Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.

Bentley, E. L, Jr., & Campbell, B. (1986). *Transition strategies at the school level: Reforming middle grades' organization and programs.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Regional Council for Educational Administration, Atlanta, GA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED276 153)

Blyth, D. A., Hill, J. P., & Smyth, C. (1981). The influence of older adolescents: Do grade level arrangements make a difference in behaviors, attitudes and experiences? *Journal of Early Adolescence, 1*, 85-110.

Blyth, D. A., Simmons, R. G., & Bush, D. (1978). The transition into early adolescence: A longitudinal comparison of youth in two educational contexts. *Sociology of Education, 51*, 149-162.

Brooks, K., & Edwards, F. (1978). The middle school in transition: A research report on the status of the middle school movement. *The CPD Memorandum, 1*(1).

California State Department of Education. (1987). *Caught in the middle: Educational reform for young adolescents in California public schools.* Sacramento, CA: Author.

Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools. (1987). *Special report on middle schools: A description of organizational structures in middle schools and their effects on student-teacher relations and instruction.* CREMS *Report*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University.

Children's Defense Fund. (1988). *Survey of state policies and programs for the middle grades.* Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.

Damico, S. B. (1985, March-April). *Social interactions in middle schools: Effects of organizational structure.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 268 395)

DeBloise, R. (1989). Taking a cue from business—Schools can become more responsive. *NASSP Bulletin, 73*(514), 15-21.

DeJung, J., & Duckworth, K. (1985). *An examination of student discipline in three middle schools.* (Final Report). Eugene, OR: University of Oregon, Center for Educational Policy and Management.

Educational Research Service, Inc. (1983). *Organization of the middle grades: A summary of research.* Arlington, VA: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 227 581)

Epstein, J. (1987). *Education of early adolescents.* Paper submitted to the State Task Force on Middle Learning Years. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University.

Erb, T. O. (Ed.). (1982). *Middle school research.* Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 226 512)

Foster, C. M., & Martinez, I. (1985). The effects of school enrollment size in the middle and junior high school on teacher and student attitude and student self-concept. *Research in Rural Education, 3*(2), 57-60.

George, P. (1989). Which way middle schools? *The Education Digest, 54*(5), 13-16.

James, M. A., & Boyles, L. E. (1985). *A teamed approach to making the transition to a middle school.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Kansas Association of School Boards, Topeka, KS. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 265 634)

Johnston, J. H., & Markle G. C. (1986). *What research says to the middle level practitioner.* Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 270 897)

Klingele, W. E. (1985). Middle level education: Do we need it? *Clearing House, 58*(8), 334-336.

Lipsitz, J. (1980). *Growing up forgotten: A review of research and programs concerning early adolescence.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Lipsitz, J. (1984). *Successful schools for young adolescents.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Mac Iver, D. (1989). *Effective practices and structures for middle grades education.* Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory.

Massachusetts Advocacy Center. (1986). *The way out: Student exclusion practices in Boston middle schools.* Boston, MA: Author.

McCune, S. (1987). Directions for restructuring schools for the future. *Noteworthy.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

McPartland, J., Coldiron, R., & Braddock, J. (1987). *A description of school structures and classroom practices in elementary, middle, and secondary schools.* (Report 14). Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.

McPartland, J., & Wu, S. (1988). *Instructional practices in the middle grades.* (Report No. 25), Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.

Midgley, C., & Feldlaufer, H. (1987). Students' and teachers' decision-making fit before and after the transition to junior high school. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 7,* 225-241.

Molitor, J. A., & Dentler, R. A. (1982). *Reorganizing the middle grades: Guidelines for administrators, school boards, and planning teams.* Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates, Inc. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 236 804)

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (1985). *An agenda for excellence at the middle level.* Reston, VA: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 263 679)

Pickler, G. (1987). The evolutionary development of inter-disciplinary teams. *Middle School Journal,* 6-7.

Putbrese, L. (1989). Advisory Programs at the middle level—the students' response. *NASSP Bulletin, 73*(514), 111-115.

Reinhartz, J., & Beach, D. M. (1983). *Improving middle school instruction.* Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Rolfe, H. (1989). The flowering of the middle school. *Virginia Journal of Education, 82*(6), 7-8.

Rounds, T., & Osaki, S. (1982). *The social organization of classrooms: An analysis of sixth and seventh grade activity structures.* (Report EPSSP-82-5). San Francisco: Far West Laboratory.

Simmons, R. G. et al. (1979). Entry into early adolescence: The impact of school structure, puberty, and early dating on self-esteem. *American Sociological Review, 44*, 948-967.

Slavin, R. E., & Karweit, N. L. (1982). *School organizational vs. developmental effects on attendance among young adolescents.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

Sprinthall, N. (1985). Early adolescents and opportunities for growth in the 1980s: Ships passing in the night, again. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 5*, 533-547.

Steele, C. A. (1985,). The truths of transescence. *Principal, 65*(2), 50-52.

Strang, R. (1957). *The adolescent views himself: A psychology of adolescence.* NY: McGraw-Hill.

Thomason, J., & Williams, B. (1982). Middle schools are for me. *Educational Leadership, 40*(2), 54-58.

Truesdell, L. A. (1988). Mainstreaming in an urban middle school: Effects of school organization and climate. *Urban Review, 20*(1), 42-58.

Virginia Department of Education. (1988). *Restructuring education in the middle school grades.* Richmond, VA: Author.

Wheelock, A., & Dorman, G. (1988). *Before it's too late: Dropout prevention in middle grades.* Boston, MA: The Center for Early Adolescence.

Wiles, J. et al. (1982). Miracle on Main Street: The St. Louis story. *Educational Leadership, 40*(2), 52-53.

Yarworth, J. S. (1988). Organizing for results in elementary and middle school mathematics. *Educational Leadership, 46*(2), 61-64.

Yoder, W. H., Jr. (1982). Middle school vs. junior high misses the point. *Educational Leadership, 40*(2), p. 50.

Youngblood, S. (1989). Middle level staff development needs: A survey of middle level educators. *NASSP Bulletin, 73*(515), 103-105.

REFERENCES

School-Based Decisionmaking

Alutto, J., & Belasco, J. (1972). A typology for participation in organizational decisionmaking. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 17*(1), 117-125.

Ariav, T. (1985, March). *Collaborative school-based curriculum development: A case study.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL: (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 257 707)

Bacharach, S., & Conely, S. (1986, May). Education reform: A managerial agenda. *Phi Delta Kappan, 67*(9), 641-645.

Bentley, E., Jr., & Campbell, B. (1986, November). *Transition strategies at the school level: Reforming middle grades' organization and programs.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Regional Council for Educational Administration, Atlanta, GA: (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 276 153)

Boyd, B. (1986, April). Collborative decision-making in local development of school policy and practices. *In a State in Action: Working with Schools for Program Improvement.* Symposium presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Bridges, E. (1967). A model for shared decision-making in the school principalship. *Educational Administrative Quarterly, 3*(1), 49-61.

Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. (1986). *A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century.* New York: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy.

Conway, J. (1976). Test of linearity between teachers' participation in decisionmaking and their perceptions of their schools as organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21, 130-139.

Davis, W., & Frank, F. (1979). *The relationship between the perceived level of decisional participation of secondary school teachers and their job satisfaction: A discrepancy approach.* Madison, WI: Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Individualized Schooling.

Dawson, J., & D'Amico, J. (1985, April). Involving program staff in evaluation studies: A strategy for increasing information use and enriching the data base. *Evaluation Review, 9*(2), 173-88.

Duke, D., Showers, B., & Imber, M. (1980). Teachers and shared decisionmaking: The costs and benefits of involvement. *Educational Administrative Quarterly, 16*(1), 93-106.

Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota. (1987, February 20). *Participatory management: Key to success.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of School Administrators, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 281 274)

Feir, R. (1985, April). *The structure of school: Teachers and authority.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED 257 806)

Furman, G. (1986, April). *School district approval for staff development: "Garbage can" decision-making.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 271 871)

Harris, L. (1986). The American Teacher 1986. *Restructuring The Teaching Profession, The Metropolitan Life Survey.* New York: Harris, and Associates, Inc.

Hawley, D. (1985, November). The quality circle concept. *Principal, 65*(2), 41-43.

Herrick, N. (1985, Fall). Is the time really ripe for educational democracy? *Social Policy, 16*(2), 53-56.

Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *Motivation to work.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Johnston, G. & Germinario, V. (1985, Winter). Relationship between teacher decisional status and loyalty. *Journal of Educational Administration, 23*(1), 91-105.

Katzell, R., & Yankelovich, D. (1975). *Work, Productivity and Job Satisfaction.* New York: Psychological Corporation, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Knight, P. (1985, January-March). The practice of school-based curriculum development. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 17*(1), 37-48.

Koppich, J. and others. (1985, Autumn). Keeping the teachers we have. *Teacher Educational Quarterly, 12*(4), 55-64.

Lawrence, D. (1985, May). The Toledo plan for peer evaluation and assistance. *Education and Urban Society, 17*(3), 347-51.

Lieberman, M. (1985, Spring). Faculty self-government: The triumphs of the academic mystique. *Government Union Review, 6*(2), 40-54.

Lipham, J. (1974). Making effective decisions. In J. A. Culbertson, C. Henson, and R. Morrison (Eds.), *Performance Objectives For School Principals.* Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Malanowski, R. and others (1986, April 20). *Professional analysis teams in schools: A case study.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 280135)

Malen, B., & Ogawa, R. (1985, August). *The implementation of the Salt Lake City School District's shared governance policy: A study of school-site councils.* Prepared for the Salt Lake City School District, UT. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 274099)

Marburger, C. (1985). *One school at a time.* School based management: A process for change. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

McCarthy, R. (1985, May). Technology, time, and participation: How a principal supports teachers. *Education and Urban Society, 17*(3), 324-31.

McMahon, D. (1987, February 20). *Getting to yes.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of School Administrators, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 280 188)

Moeser, E., & Golen, L. (1987, April). *Participative management: A labor management process that works for kids.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National School Boards Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 281 275)

Mohrman, A., Jr., Cooke, R., & Mohrman, S. (1978). Participation in decisionmaking: A multidimensional perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 14*(1), 13-19.

National Education Association. (1984). *An open letter to America: On schools, students, and tomorrow.* Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Nicholson, J. (1987, August). School-based decisionmaking in Stamford, CT. *The Developer, 1,* 4-6.

Olson, L. (1986, March 19). Teachers seek decisionmaking power. *Education Week, 4.*

Pajak, E., & Glickman, C. (1987, March). *Dimensions of improving school districts.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 281 313)

Powell, R., & Schlacter, I. (1971). Participative management: A panacea? *Academy of Management Journal, 14,* 165-173.

Public Education Information Network. (1985). Equity and excellence: Toward an agenda for school reform. *Education for a democratic future.* St. Louis, MO: Public Education Information Network.

Rennie, R. (1985, April). School centered management: A matter of style. *School Business Affairs, 51*(4), 64-65, 67.

Saber, N. (1985, October-December). School-based curriculum development: Reflections from an international seminar. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 17*(4), 52-54.

Salganik, L. (1985, March). *Schools under pressure: The external environment and recent organizational reforms.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 265 636)

Sange-Walters, P. et al. (1987, February). *Total school intervention programs: A state initiative to improve staff development through organization development.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 279 089)

Sarason, S. et al. (1985, November). Fulfilling the promise: A fresh look at collaboration and resource sharing in education. *Pathways to growth.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Schlechty, P. et al. (1985, December-January). The Charlotte-Mecklenburg teacher career development program. *Educational Leadership, 42*(4), 4-8.

Schmuck, R., & Runkel, P. (1985). *Handbook of organization development in schools* (3rd Ed.) Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Schneider, G. (1984). Teacher involvement in decisionmaking: Zones of acceptance, decision conditions, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 18*(1), 25-32.

Schools oust principals. (1987, September). *Communicator, 11*(1), 1.

Seashore, S., & Bowers, D. (1963). *Changing the Structure and Functioning of an Organization.* Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan State Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

Shedd, J. et al. (1986, April 20). *Teachers as decisionmakers.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 280 132)

Sizer, T. (1984). *Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Sorenson, L. (1985, April). *Decision making of public school superintendents: The involvement of subordinates and others.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 265 615)

Speed, N. (1979). *Decision participation and staff satisfaction in middle and junior high schools that individualize instruction* (Technical Report No. 521). Madison, WI: Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Individualized Schooling.

Streich, W. (1986, April). *Public school curriculum improvement through participatory evaluation.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 274 080)

Vroom, V. (1964). *Work and Motivation.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Zerchykov, R. (1985, Fall). Why school councils? *Equity and Choice, 2*(1), 37-38.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Virginia Department of Education Goals for Middle School Program Design

After study and review, goals should be identified to serve as a basis for a total program design which addresses the comprehensive developmental characteristics and needs of early adolescents. These goals should address but may go beyond:

— positive school climate;

— high expectations by all staff members for all students to achieve;

— the need for each student to be known well and advised on a regular basis by an adult in the school;

— emphasis on students' doing rather than saying;

— emphasis on students' learning and working cooperatively;

— emphasis on concrete learning;

— emphasis on all students' mastery of basic skills and efficient study skills;

— emphasis on higher order thinking skills, to include critical and creative thinking and problem-solving;

— emphasis on career assessment and on firsthand experience with those who work;

— emphasis on the interdisciplinary nature of skills and knowledge;

— flexibility in scheduling and organizational structure;

— implementation of effective teaching practices based on research;

— use of technology as a productivity and instructional tool, with special emphasis on remediation and in meeting the needs of at-risk students and potential dropouts.

— appropriate transition from the elementary school, through the middle grades, and to the high school;

— an expanded assessment system for documentation of student achievement which includes more than the results of standardized achievement tests;

— involvement of parents in the process of education; and

— involvement of the school in the community, and the community in the school.

Virginia Department of Education. (1988). *Restructuring education in the middle school grades.* Richmond, VA: Author.

APPENDIX B

MEMORANDUM

TO: VEA-AEL Study Group Members

FROM: Jane Hange and Peggy Dent

SUBJECT: Project description form and future opportunities

DATE: June 8, 1989

Perhaps when you receive this you will have your feet propped up and be looking ahead to a relaxing summer. We hope so! We look forward to receiving your editing recommendations and any additions to the VEA-AEL study group publication by June 22.

So that we may "pick your brains" a little more thoroughly to prepare a final draft rich in the facts and feelings of restructuring at your school, we have developed the enclosed Progress Reflections form. While quotes from the forms may be included, all responses will be used anonymously to add detail to the Obstacles and Accomplishments section we suggested in the last study group meeting. A Recommendations section of enumerated suggestions may also be developed based upon the gems you include. Taken as a whole, the Rationale, Chronologies, Obstacles and Accomplishments, and Recommendations sections should chronicle the events and participant perspectives of the first year of restructuring at two middle schools. Your stories and suggestions should enable others to prevent some problems in their first year of restructuring. Please reflect on the year individually, include examples or elaborate within your responses, and mail the form by June 26 in the enclosed envelope. We'd like a response from each study group member. You might also consider copying the form for other teachers or your principal.

Helen Rolfe, in a conversation June 7, stated that your product will be distributed at the November 9-11 VEA conference "Site-Based Decisionmaking: A Process for Change". The conference will focus on training conducted by UniServ staff in the NEA Site-Based Decisionmaking package. Study group members will be invited to attend and may be involved in a dialog with participants from the VEA-AEL study group on participatory decisionmaking and schools described in their product *Participatory Decisionmaking: Working Models in Virginia Elementary Schools*. (This has not been finalized.)

Jim Caruth's idea in our April 11 meeting of additional study group products such as audio- or videotapes of Core Committee meetings or consensus reaching with the entire faculty and/or student and community representatives, etc., was well received by Helen. We all hope that you will plan to continue the study group's discussion of projects and problems and will wish to create additional products useful to practitioners.

We will develop a final draft publication incorporating your changes and mail it July 12. In the meantime, please check your calendars to see if you can participate in a conference call on Wednesday, July 19 at 2 p.m. or Monday, July 24 at 10 a.m.. Please complete the attached Conference Call Form and mail back to AEL with your Progress Reflections in the enclosed envelope. The purpose of the call is to discuss the final draft of the publication and to arrange future study group meetings to discuss and develop additional projects for 1989-90. It is possible the group may be able to display additional products at the November conference.

Thank you for your hard work and interest in maintaining the group. Please phone whenever AEL can assist. We hope you will be pleased with the final publication and proud to have been an author. (RX for thorough and painless Progress Reflections responding: Sit in a comfortable chair with your favorite nonalcoholic beverage. Answer three questions per day. Skip a day and repeat the process until all questions are completed. Pop it in the mail to AEL by June 26. Relax and have a low stress summer!)

1988-89
VEA-AEL MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDY GROUP PROGRESS REFLECTIONS

Please read the following questions, then respond to each with examples of decisions, actions, and your perspectives of the first year of restructuring to form a middle school. All responses will be used confidentially and anonymously. Some questions may not apply to your school or you may not know answers, indicate this. Use back of sheets if needed.

1. **Why did your faculty begin restructuring toward a middle school configuration? Who were the main initiators of the project (positions only)? What percentage of the faculty initially supported the project? Was there administrative or teacher resistance to the project? If so, what were the reasons for resistance?**

2. What improvements did faculty expect through restructuring to a middle school? Were there factors about your present school that you hoped to change? What were they?

3. **"Restructuring in the Middle Grades" (Virginia Department of Education, 1988) suggests that each faculty conduct a self assessment to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement. What sources of school data (test scores, indicators of student socioeconomic status, attendance records, parent involvement records, grading patterns, etc.) have your faculty or Core Committee examined? Have you conducted a survey of faculty, administrators, parents, community, and/or students? Were other methods of self assessment used during the first year? Please describe any formal or informal methods.**

4. **"Restructuring in the Middle Grades" further suggests that schools study and review research on developmental characteristics of early adolescents; effective teaching, learning, and grouping praactices; and uses of technology as an instructional and productivity tool with special emphasis on applications for remediations and for assisting at-risk students. Was a review of research begun during the first year of restructuring at your school? What sources of information were used (VEA, VDE, etc)? Was the total faculty involved in reviewing some or all of the materials obtained? What methods were used to enhance faculty access to information? For what purposes was the information used or shared?**

5. **How was the structure of the Core Committee conceptualized? How were members selected? Of the total number of teachers at your school, how many are active members of the Committee? Were leaders identified, or did they emerge from the group? Are school or division administrators regularly involved in group meetings? Is a division of responsibilities among members apparent and/or effective? Will the group remain the same for next year? What methods are used to obtain total faculty involvement in restructuring decisions? Do members represent and report to one or more specified groups of faculty members (grade level, department, etc.)? After one year of work, is there unity between the Core Committee and the faculty? Why or why not?**

6. Reflecting on decisions or actions made by the faculty and/or the Core Committee during the first year of restructuring, which were the most important? Which actions or decisions were the most controversial? What actions or decisions, in your opinion, will be most important for the next school year?

7. Thinking about the processes of Core Committee and total faculty meetings, please describe those most often used. How were items for the agenda selected? Did all members know the meeting's agenda before they arrived? How were decisions reached? Were decisions final or did they require approval of others not attending the meeting? If so, who? Describe school adminstrators' roles regarding the Core Committee? Were decisions representative of general faculty opinions? Could faculty members not on the planning group add items to the agenda or bring up new business? Did you receive training in methods which were then used in meetings? Which methods were most effective?
   What were your personal reactions to group participation this year?

8. What were/are the biggest obstacles facing the restructuring process at your school? How did the Core Committee confront these set-backs or what plans have been discussed to confront them in the next year?

9. What were the greatest accomplishments of your school's first year of restructuring? Explain why these were significant.
   Have students seen any impact of your efforts in the classroom or school? Please explain.

10. Please state the middle school mission statement(s) developed this year. Briefly describe the process used to develop the statements. Include discussion of who was involved and how their involvement was obtained?

11. **What are the restructuring goals of the Core Committee and/or faculty for 1989-90? By this time next year, what do you hope to have accomplished? Will the current processes used be effective in reaching these goals? What other steps may have to be taken?**

12. **What have you learned about yourself and about school-based decisionmaking because of your active involvement with the project? If you were to change any of your actions in connection with work on restructuring, what would those changes be?**

13. **How satisfied are you with project progress at this point? What needs to be done for you to be more satisfied? Do you feel more or less hopeful or enthusiastic than when you began the project? Please explain.**

14. What recommendations would you make to other teachers and administrators beginning restructuring toward a middle school organization?

15. What is your view to date of participation in the VEA-AEL study group? What changes would make the group's work a more rewarding professional development experience for you?

Thank you for responding to the above questions. Your responses may be quoted in the study group's first year chronicle but no respondent will be identified by name or school. Please return this form in the enclosed envelope. Phone if you have questions about any aspect of study group work. We will analyze and summarize the data and incorporate findings into a separate section of the product. We plan to have this final draft to you in mid-July. Your help with the school chronicles and the survey has been much appreciated.

My preference for a VEA-AEL study group conference call would be:

(Circle one)

Wednesday, July 19 2 p.m.	Monday, July 24 10 a.m.

____ I will not be able to participate at either time. But I'll send my suggestions about the final group product to Jane or Peggy at AEL.

____ I will participate! Please call me at this phone number (_____) _____-_____.

Jane will send a memo or phone to confirm the conference call date. The telephone operator will phone to connect all of us.

Thank you for completing this form and returning it with your Progress Reflections form in the enclosed envelope. I look forward to talking with you soon.